

# Operationalizing the Asia-Pacific Defense Strategy

By THOMAS B. FARGO



U.S. Marine Corps (Cobra M. Jones)

**T**he Quadrennial Defense Review and *National Security Strategy of the United States* call for transforming the Armed Forces to assure both allies and friends of our commitment to existing

security arrangements, dissuade military competition, deter threats to vital interests, and decisively defeat enemies that are not or cannot be deterred. U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) therefore operationalizes national security strategy and national military strategy with a regional emphasis. This effort requires an understanding of future

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*USS Kitty Hawk getting underway, Yokosuka.*



Fleet Imaging Center, Pacific (David A. Levy)

threats, an assessment of evolving political-military realities of the region, and a well-charted course to the future. Just as the threat has been transformed, it is also clear that capabilities, command structures, and security relationships must be transformed to guarantee the stability on which the goals of peace-loving nations depend.

### The Security Context

Anticipating the changing threat and resource constraints requires a new defense planning construct—a 4-2-1 strategy—to develop forces which, besides homeland defense and maintaining a strategic reserve, can project power in four geographic areas, positioning to swiftly defeat two enemies simultaneously, and decisively defeating one of them. Three of four areas of emphasis within the strategy (Northeast Asia, the East Asian littoral, and the Middle East/Southwest Asia) fall within or bear directly on the PACOM area of responsibility.

The new security environment is likely to influence U.S. security as follows:

- Non-state actors will become an increasing security concern. Exploiting gaps in international law and governance, they can find sanctuary behind sovereign boundaries regardless of the level of state support. Having little in common with our value systems, no sovereign territory, and a ready willingness to sacrifice human life for their cause, they are difficult if not impossible to deter.

- The need to dissuade strategic competition and deter conflict with or between state actors continues.

- Just as terrorism has come to be recognized as a global threat, the response to transnational problems is normally multi-lateral. Such threats will continue to pose immediate and recurring dangers to international stability and security due to increasingly interrelated economies and national interests.

- Unable to challenge our military power directly, enemies will continue to attack value targets with surprise, employing asymmetric lethality.

- The window of opportunity to detect and engage enemy targets will shorten. Therefore the requirement to rapidly validate targets and strike with precision to minimize collateral damage will grow.

- Proliferation of missiles, weapons of mass destruction, submarines, mines, and other asymmetric capabilities, especially by unscrupulous or economically desperate nations, will continue. Emerging threats employing these technologies gain disproportionate killing power with relatively little investment in money, time, training, or infrastructure.

### Allies and Friends

The premise of the U.S. security equation in the Asia-Pacific region will continue to be longstanding bilateral alliances. The most important alliance is the pact with Japan. Its self defense forces and infrastructure support have been essential to mutual security. Tokyo has also contributed generously to the global war on terrorism. Shortly after 9/11, the Diet passed legislation to provide assistance as far forward as the

northern Arabian Gulf. The relationship with Japan has never been stronger.

Similarly, sound relations with the Republic of Korea (ROK) have been the cornerstone of security on the peninsula for some fifty years. Millions of people live within 40 kilometers of the demilitarized zone. Moreover, the military-first policies and nuclear weapons program of North Korea are being pursued as its society atrophies. Pyongyang is a primary proliferator of ballistic missile technology—capabilities that threaten U.S. forces and that may soon threaten Americans at home. In spite of these developments, a strong and time-proven relationship with the South Korean government and armed forces continues to deter aggression from the North. And Seoul has made generous contributions to the war on terrorism, invoking the spirit of the U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty and providing airlift and sealift as well as field hospital support.

Australia is an old ally and special partner in the area. PACOM has worked to eliminate potential barriers, both technological and procedural, between

### **the Republic of the Philippines and Thailand are key to the stability of Southeast Asia**

Australian and American forces. Australians have taken a lead role in East Timor, as a partner and regional leader in the global war on terrorism, and in the security and democratic development of the nations of the South Pacific. A strong and expanding relationship with Australia is fundamental to transformation efforts and continued Asia-Pacific security.

The Republic of the Philippines and Thailand are critical allies that are key to the stability of Southeast Asia. Both nations have made substantial contributions to the war on terrorism. Early in 2002, the United States responded to a request from the Philippines for assistance in developing its counterterrorist capabilities. In conjunction with Balikatan 02-1, PACOM has helped the Philippine military es-

tablish a comprehensive intelligence architecture and continues to provide training to combat the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group.

Singapore is a strategic partner and strong friend in the region with which the United States enjoys mature relations on many levels. Singapore has been active in counterterrorism, thwarting attacks and arresting some thirty suspects. It was also the first nation in Asia to join the container security initiative—a project designed to improve the safety of some 6 million shipping containers entering U.S. ports every year.

Malaysia has also arrested many terrorists and contributed in significant ways. PACOM is encouraged by the prospect of a counterterrorism training center in Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia is an active participant in humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, search and rescue, and peace operations and continues to host American troops for exercises.

In addition, the United States has a new and promising relationship with India, which is the most populous democracy in the world and a natural friend. PACOM has revitalized military-to-military security cooperation in various mutually beneficial areas.

India was an early contributor to the global war on terrorism, providing essential vessel escort through the Strait of Malacca and authorizing both overflight and access to the crucial air bridge for Operation Enduring Freedom. Renewed relations with the Indian armed forces holds promise for security in the region.

### **Command and Control**

Emerging security challenges necessitate command and control constructs that are adaptable and capable of meeting a range of threats. In operationalizing the defense strategy, joint command and control (C<sup>2</sup>) will change. The interdependent relationships between unified commanders and the countries of the region must be selectively nurtured without being constrained by sentiment or Cold War inertia. In this respect, joint command and control is undergoing a transformation.

Established with specific geographic focus, subunified commands under PACOM exercise operational command and control of assigned commands within their respective operational areas. Command structures such as U.S. Forces Korea and U.S. Forces Japan have served the region for fifty years, organized for specific conflicts. In continuing to seek C<sup>2</sup> efficiencies, adjusting to changes in the operational environment, and benefiting from technologies that extend the operational reach of the unified commander, these organizations will evolve accordingly.

The Quadrennial Defense Review called for a look at the standing joint task force (SJTF). This organization can act as operational testbed, exploiting asymmetries for “significantly greater military capability at lower personnel levels.” The concept is enabled by joint command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C<sup>4</sup>ISR) architecture, dynamic training and exercise programs, and standard operating procedures. These tools provide a common operational picture and the tactics, techniques, and procedures for mission planning and operations across the conflict spectrum. Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, has been designated as head of Joint Task Force 519, a mobile, tailorable SJTF that can respond to major conflicts in the region. It has a standing component and thus benefits from habitual relationships with common operating procedures which are routinely tested and improved in exercises. Other JTFs in the area will be commanded by regional three-star officers as appropriate.

The SJTF organization evolved from work produced under the maturing joint mission force (JMF) program, the centerpiece C<sup>2</sup> initiative that is fundamental to change management. JMF is a capabilities-based package of 20,000 people drawn from designated component ready forces, augmented by supporting component commands, coalition partners, and a coordinated group of information operations/non-governmental/private volunteer organizations from which a commander





Filipino forces  
combatting Abu Sayyaf  
rebels.

AP/Wide World Photo (Aaron Favila)

can assemble tailored forces for a variety of missions. Jumpstarted with a core joint team known as a deployable JTF augmentation cell, JMF turns a single subordinate command headquarters into a trained and mission-focused joint warfighting team that is ready and capable of accomplishing smaller scale, mission-specific contingencies. An element of the JMF concept is linking potential missions to a subordinate three- or four-star command based on core competencies, operational strengths, and theater force posture. This is intended to provide a natural fit for a commander with minimal force augmentation from other subcomponents. The joint mission force suite includes forcible entry, strikes and raids, deterrence options, sea lines of communication protection, foreign consequence management, peace operations, noncombatant evacuation operations, and foreign humanitarian assistance/disaster relief.

Prior to 9/11, PACOM leveraged the power of joint interagency cooperation through Joint Interagency Task Force-West (JIATF-W), the Pacific counterdrug task force. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, it took the joint interagency C<sup>2</sup> structure to a new level by forming the Joint Interagency Coordination Group for Counterterrorism (JIACG/CT). The mission of the group is fusing interagency capabilities into operations to destroy terrorism in the Pacific theater. Starting from a nucleus of personnel from across the PACOM staff, the group has called on select expertise from civilian agencies including the Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Security Agency, Treasury Department, Defense Intelligence Agency, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, and National Imagery and Mapping Agency. Taken together

this offensively oriented, premier C<sup>2</sup> element serves to synchronize and operationalize the theater counterterrorism campaign plan, shortening the intelligence-to-action response time by fusing information relevant to an emerging threat and rapidly coordinating military or civilian responses.

A second approach developed after 9/11 for antiterrorism/force protection (AT/FP) is the joint rear area security coordinator program. PACOM implemented a structure to facilitate coordination and establish unity of effort among command components, local, state, and Federal agencies, host nations, and in some instances commercial resources to secure infrastructure, assets, and support personnel. Consisting of geographically focused C<sup>2</sup> cells in Guam, Hawaii, Alaska, Japan, and Korea, these defensively oriented elements serve as quick response cells to assess and implement force protection measures in the Pacific.

# U.S. Pacific Command



Established in 1947, U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) has an area of responsibility that contains over 50 percent of the surface of the globe and 43 nations. In addition, the six largest militaries in the world (China, India, North Korea, and South Korea, Russia, and the United States) operate in the Asia-Pacific region.

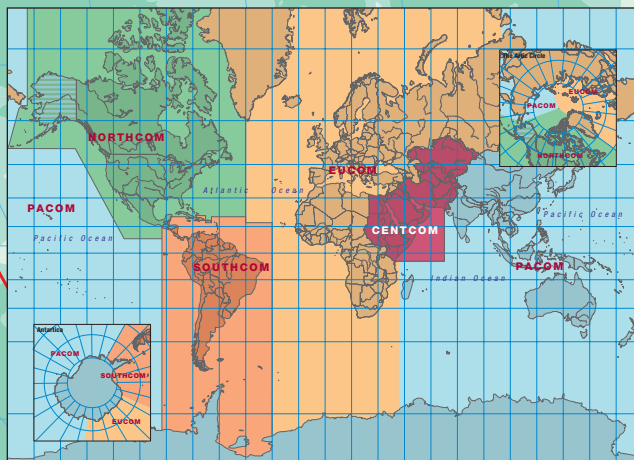
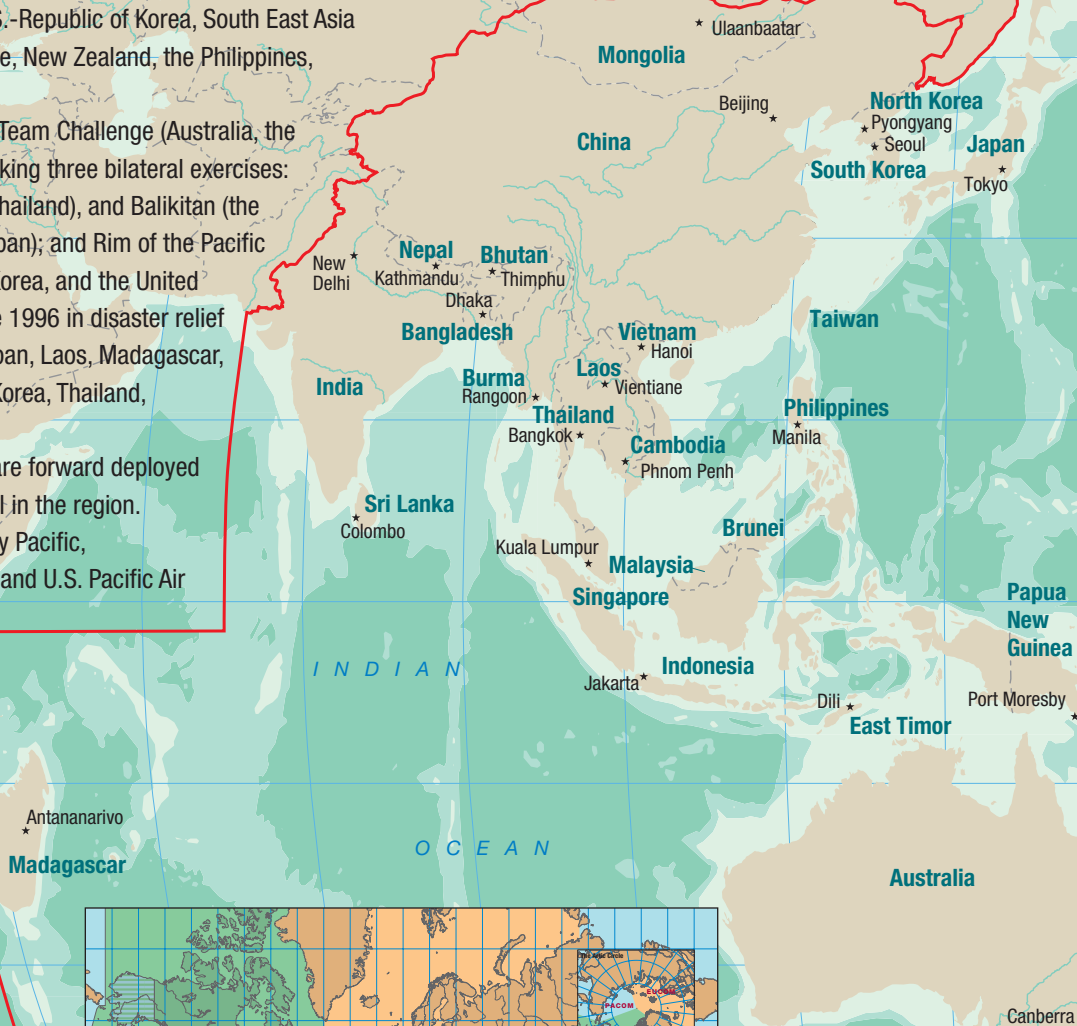
The United States maintains five of its seven worldwide defense treaties with countries of the region: U.S.-Republic of the Philippines, ANZUS (U.S., Australia, and New Zealand), U.S.-Republic of Korea, South East Asia

Collective Defense (U.S., Australia, France, New Zealand, the Philippines, and Thailand), and U.S.-Japan.

Major command exercises include Team Challenge (Australia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand), linking three bilateral exercises: Tandem Thrust (Australia), Cobra Gold (Thailand), and Balikatan (the Philippines); Keen Sword/Keen Edge (Japan); and Rim of the Pacific (Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom). PACOM has participated since 1996 in disaster relief operations in China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Madagascar, Myanmar, Palau, the Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, and the U.S. Territory of Guam.

Some 100,000 military personnel are forward deployed in theater with 300,000 members overall in the region.

Component commands include U.S. Army Pacific, Marine Forces Pacific, U.S. Pacific Fleet, and U.S. Pacific Air Forces. In addition there are five subordinate unified commands: U.S. Forces, Japan; U.S. Forces, Korea; Eighth U.S. Army; Special Operations Command Pacific; and Alaskan Command; two standing joint task forces: Joint Interagency Task Force West and Joint Intelligence Center Pacific; and three supporting units: Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Joint Intelligence Center Pacific, and Center of Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance Studies.





[Note: The State of Alaska is in the U.S. Northern Command area of responsibility, but the forces based in Alaska remain assigned to U.S. Pacific Command.]

The PACOM area also includes: Comoros, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Maldives, Republic of Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Republic of Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.



Fleet Combat Camera Group, Pacific (Ted Banks)

F-16 over Alaska, Northern Edge '02.



1<sup>st</sup> Combat Camera Squadron (D. Wyles Cullen)



56<sup>th</sup> Signal Company (Vincent A. King)



Marines and Filipino soldiers, Balikatan '02.

3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division Combat Camera (Shane A. Austin)



American and Singaporean divers, CARAT '02.

U.S. Navy (Michael A. Hamar)



Australians with Marines, Millennium Dragon '02.

1<sup>st</sup> Combat Camera Squadron (John Houghton)

Thai marines landing from U.S. amphibious assault vehicle.



3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division (Antonio J. Vega)

## Force Posture

The 4-2-1 construct has obvious planning implications and requires the improved speed, precision, and lethality of transformed forces. PACOM must position credible combat capability as far forward in theater as possible. Taking advantage of improvements in command and control, mobility, and lethality allows the command to streamline its forces and reduce adverse impact on allies while maintaining combat power westward. The transformed forces must communicate both improved capability and continued commitment to allies and friends.

The command is homeporting three freshly overhauled and refueled nuclear-powered attack submarines in Guam. Regular deployments of bomber, fighter, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets to Guam or other locations are being considered. Refueled submarines and deployed bombers are not transformed forces in their own right. However, when employed with new operational

concepts, they represent a significant move of rapidly available, flexible combat power westward as part of overall transformation.

## Korea has enacted a plan to position U.S. forces in proximity to likely areas of employment

As PACOM moves forces west, it must ensure that the logistic infrastructure supports rapid and sustainable employment while minimizing its footprint. Streamlined command structures and improved information reachback capabilities, such as those provided by a new air operations center at Hickam Air Force Base on Oahu, will relieve pressure resulting from the burgeoning population in the region. Already this is an issue of concern in both Korea and Japan. For example, the Republic of Korea has enacted a land partnership plan to position U.S.

forces in proximity to likely areas of employment while consolidating American facilities. By 2011 the U.S. military will release over half of its holdings of 55,000 acres and 500 buildings, valued at over \$1 billion, in exchange for access to 1,200 new acres and more ranges. The plan also establishes safety easements around some facilities

to reduce untoward interactions. Similar initiatives are underway in Japan under a special action committee on Okinawa.

## Access and Logistics

The requirement to project combat power forward is growing and calls for reliable access to suitable locations. The theater security cooperation program plays a major role in providing access while improving common defense arrangements and coalition competence. As before, places that provide access to support security cooperation, training, and joint operations are most relevant.



Singapore, for example, sits at the junction of the Singapore and Malacca straits—the most crucial waterway in the theater. Singapore is a great supporter of U.S. presence within the region, hosting a modest logistic presence that was established after Philippines bases closed and a port facility was built at Changi to accommodate aircraft carriers. Access to the port at Sembawang and Paya Lebar airfield have long been key enablers to regional security and were stops in the logistic bridge for Enduring Freedom. PACOM is studying other ways to improve access while incorporating other transformational improvements.

Retaining a combat edge requires training and facilities to permit realistic training profiles. PACOM is a steward of the environment and shares an interest in achieving security mandates without any harm to people and ecosystems. These goals will be met by both leveraging access and applying creative technology to gain combat-relevant training.

### Flexible Capabilities

Unable to specify future threats with certainty, PACOM is instead focusing on the manner in which threats might subsist, execute strategies, and employ developing capabilities. Existing assets must be adapted to improve future relevance, and evolving capabilities must be tailorable to the manner (if not timing or location) in which an enemy may threaten us. Many transformation goals hinge on the combined future lethality of U.S. and coalition forces. We must also help allies build capabilities to enhance their contributions to their own security, which has a complementary effect on footprint consolidation, and ensure that the capabilities they bring to the fight marry well with future U.S. capabilities.

Increasing reliance on accurate and timely information has been reemphasized in Enduring Freedom and is particularly crucial in light of emerging dangers. Future threats employing stealth and surprise will attempt to exploit gaps in intelligence coverage and establish tactical ambiguities to complicate responses. Furthermore, worldwide demand for information requires intelligence assets

Singaporean L-30 taking off from Korat, Thailand.



4th Combat Camera Squadron (Jeff Clonkey)

with increased joint utility. Intelligence collection, analysis, and dissemination capabilities (including bilateral and multilateral sharing constructs) must be expedited, with authority to act on validated information pushed to the lowest possible level. In the new security context, intelligence of offensive value will be crucial. However, there will still be a premium on defensively oriented intelligence that directly enables force protection.

The nature of future threats and unacceptability of absorbing a debilitating first strike dictate the requirement to minimize the interval between threat detection and response. Further, the shooter must be provided with the right information to minimize ambiguity and make sound engagement decisions. Eliminating unnecessary infrastructure between sensor and shooter can help—on land, in the air, or in space. Arming the sensor and maximizing the time it spends in range of potential targets can reduce the sensor-to-shooter cycle time. This capability was seen in unmanned combat aerial vehicles over Afghanistan and more recently in Yemen. Global Hawk or other systems may also play a similar role in the future, operating from Guam or perhaps Australia.

Conversion of some *USS Ohio*-class ballistic missile submarines to cruise missile/Special Operations

Forces carriers (SSGNs) are examples of capabilities that position major firepower and forces forward in theater on a survivable, long-dwelling platform. Acting either alone or as part of a tailored expeditionary strike group, SSGNs hold great promise.

The proliferation of ballistic missiles demands an effective theater missile defense capability. Secure, mobile, and enhanced by joint intelligence, such a defense is vital to security and stability throughout the region, particularly Northeast Asia. The capability to deal with short range ballistic missiles is a particularly high priority.

For forces and matériel not prepositioned forward, the capability to move them quickly to the battlefield must be improved. One initiative is the high speed vessel, which was recently tested in Millennium Challenge '02 and proven while in support of III Marine Expeditionary Force and Australian-led coalition operations in East Timor. A joint, reconfigurable high speed vehicle could enhance response time with a range of forces. The considerations relevant to this joint capability include service ownership of the program, asset disposition, and command and control.

The Army Stryker is a highly deployable combat vehicle that combines firepower, battlefield mobility, situational awareness, survivability, and versatility with fewer logistic demands. The Stryker brigade combat team will



add a capability to joint forces, especially in the Pacific. Flexible transportation and sustainment are key to its quick operational employment. Thoughtful lift posture, such as the C-17 aircraft or the high speed vehicle forward in theater, can make the brigade a very attractive option.

Improved network capacity and security enclaves are top information needs. Initiatives that address the shortfall are the wide area relay network (WARNET), combined operations wide area network (COWAN), and joint information capabilities enhancement environment (JICEE). JTF WARNET ensures a high capacity on the joint tactical level via satellite and nonsatellite airborne relay communications, while COWAN promises to share information among coalition partners of differing interests on a common network. Both are critical to agile command and control.

Combatant commanders, working with the Joint Staff, must provide a framework that will enable technology to proffer solutions that maximize operational effectiveness and combat power. The global information grid is a good start, but it needs more rigor to integrate service-developed solutions into a coherent infrastructure for network centric operations. PACOM has developed an information capabilities framework to map solutions on the grid and align systems through JICEE.

### **theater security cooperation embraces efforts to address issues of common interest**

This will bring C<sup>4</sup>ISR systems into the command headquarters building as a pilot program.

Advanced concept technology demonstrations offer a streamlined process for linking joint operational requirements with technological advances. With capabilities-based demonstrations and evaluations, technological innovation and commercial products are focused on their military utility to provide quantum improvements in warfighting. PACOM sponsors 19 demonstrations, several of



AP/Wide World Photo (Jon Hargest)

which are showing operational utility today in support of Enduring Freedom.

### **Operating Concepts**

New flexible capabilities must be integrated into meaningful operating patterns and concepts. PACOM will develop new concepts forward and in concert with allies.

Theater security cooperation embraces defense and defense-related efforts conducted with allies, friends, and potential coalition partners to both build mutual capabilities and address issues of common interest. Unlike past emphasis on broad-based engagement, recent guidance calls for combatant commanders to develop and implement a more focused strategy. In this regard, theater security cooperation is the vehicle to establish favorable conditions for future operations, whether to support the war on terrorism or longer-term objectives such as interoperability, transformational capabilities, and hedges against surprise. PACOM is pursuing an integrated, iterative approach to theater security cooperation in which support activities are linked with clearly defined objectives to facilitate the operational focus.

The joint training plan provides guidance for planning, executing, and assessing training in the theater. This plan specifies improvements in joint and combined readiness while facilitating transformation and security cooperation. In practice it follows the tenets of joint training, uses the joint mission essential task list assessment methodology for exercises, integrates the most likely and dangerous missions, and seeks to optimize joint and multinational training opportunities with emphasis on identifying and resolving interoperability issues.

The joint operations and experimentation program provides another venue for change. By leveraging joint warfighting concepts, doctrinal innovations, and new technology in an operational environment, PACOM can benefit from improved operations while eliminating the gap between innovative ideas and operational utility. The task of transformation is urgent. There is neither the time nor money to pursue programs that fail to yield dividends. Particular relevance can be found in those activities that fall within the nexus of all the initiatives.

A number of operating concepts under development promise to demonstrate utility in each program. In addition to the joint mission force, new concepts include the Navy and Marine Corps expeditionary strike force and the Air Force air and space expeditionary force. Capabilities like the Stryker combat vehicle lifted by C-17 aircraft or high speed vessels, submarine conversions, Patriot advanced capability 3 systems (and ultimately Aegis-based theater ballistic missile defense squadrons), bombers, and ISR deployments must be integrated into these concepts. As these concepts mature, however, the missions for which they are intended must be well defined and incorporate sufficient flexibility to accommodate shifts in enemy capabilities. The effects created on future battlefields must drive capability development, not the reverse. Furthermore, the logistic infrastructure for sustainability must be synchronized for joint missions.

Coordination among the services, defense agencies, and unified commands has never been more crucial. Combatant commanders bear a major responsibility to define missions in their areas with a high degree of relevance. Evolving C<sup>2</sup> relationships must have a global impact. The ability to shift between supported and supporting roles—especially for U.S. Pacific Command in relation to U.S. Strategic Command and U.S. Special Operations Command—must be seamless.

U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) is the premier experimentation and transformation command. PACOM serves as one of its field surrogates, providing ideas, forces, and the theater as a testbed. And cooperation with the Office of Force Transformation and JFCOM must promote efficient experimentation and testing while producing reliable and timely feedback.

Acquisition programs must maximize rather than marginalize contributions by allies. With other nations, informed dialogue, experimentation, and working relations will identify cooperative efforts to enhance capabilities, promote access to fulfill commitments, and develop competencies. Allies will assume even greater shares of their own

F-15 over Alaska  
during Northern  
Edge '02.



1<sup>st</sup> Combat Camera Squadron (Cherie A. Thurbay)

defense burden through flexible expeditionary forces, diversified access, consolidated footprints, credible infrastructure, and improved interoperability. Such advances will allow PACOM, as part of a team, to project combat power forward, maintain host nation relations, and deal with economic realities.

For combatant commanders, the challenge of transformation is clear—make the operational link between national strategy and tangible regional security improvements by leveraging

advances in technology and empowering force innovation. Strategic guidance directs operational endstates, and supporting objectives lead to measurable progress.

The PACOM focus ensures that the right things are done at the right time and for the right purpose. Integrated efforts that improve command and control structures, update plans, enhance forward force posture and access, transform capabilities, and integrate those capabilities into new operating patterns and concepts provide vehicles for effecting meaningful change.

**JFQ**